

## Access and Equity Advisory Committee's Recommendation:

**Below for Committee's approval is Access & Equity Advisory Committee's recommendation of the revised guidelines (in red and strikethroughs) for the Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program.**

### Guidelines for Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program

#### **Description and Goals**

The Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program is an optional method of pursuing any or all of the following Access and Equity Program goals:

1. Address financial needs of ~~traditional~~ **historically** underrepresented students by structuring and maintaining state programs for undergraduate students.
2. Remove barriers that inhibit transfer from two-year to baccalaureate degree granting institutions.
3. Continue to strengthen historically black colleges to ensure that they will be able to fulfill their missions as full partners in the higher education system and provide quality education programs.

Senior institutions, regional campuses of the University of South Carolina, and South Carolina technical colleges may utilize a portion of their access and equity funds to provide scholarships to **historically** underrepresented students to diversify the educational enterprise.

The program is designed to serve "~~traditional~~ **historically** underrepresented" South Carolina resident students who have proven their ability to do college-level work. Therefore, grantees who maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least ~~2.0~~ **2.5** will be eligible to receive additional ~~grants~~ **scholarships** in subsequent years if funds are available.

Priority should be given to applications of full-time students when making Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholar awards. Remaining available funds may be awarded to part-time learners enrolled in ~~baccalaureate~~ degree programs at the public institutions defined in Chapter 112 of Title 59.

#### **Eligibility Requirements**

Have a high school GPA of at least 3.0 **on the SC uniform grading scale (2.5 for technical colleges);**

**If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.5, but not below a 2.0, the student will have a one year grace period to raise their cumulative GPA back to the minimum 2.5 before the student loses their scholarship.**

**If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.0, there is no grace period for this student and the student loses their scholarship. When the student increases their cumulative GPA to the minimum 2.5, the student may reapply for the scholarship.**

**Current scholarship recipients are exempted from the recommended guidelines until academic year 2008-2009.**

**New scholarship recipients will adhere to the recommended guidelines beginning academic year 2007-2008.**

## **I. Full-time Students**

The amount authorized for each "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program" grantee is any amount up to ~~\$1,000~~ **\$2,000** for the academic year with no guarantee that "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars" funds will be provided for the student in subsequent years.

### **A. First-time Entering Freshmen Students**

In order to be eligible to receive an "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars" award, the applicant must:

- a. be a United States citizen;
- b. be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statutes for tuition and fees, statute 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education;
- c. enroll as a full-time, degree-seeking student.

### **B. ~~Sophomore Students~~ Continuing Students**

In order to be eligible to receive an "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars" award, the applicant must:

- a. be a United States citizen;
- b. be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statutes for tuition and fees, statute 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education.
- c. have completed at least ~~30~~ **24** semester hours (~~24 hours for technical colleges~~) in an academic program. ~~in which the institution offers a baccalaureate degree, or have completed at least 30 semester hours towards the requirements for the Associate in Arts, the Associate in Science, or any other associate degree at an institution which is regionally accredited;~~

- d. have a cumulative GPA of at least ~~2.0~~ **2.5**;
- e. ~~have received an “Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars” award as a first time entering freshmen.~~

C. ~~Eligibility Requirements—Full-time Students Transfer Students to 4 Year Institutions~~

In order to be eligible to receive an “Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars” award, the applicant must:

- a. be a United States citizen;
- b. be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statues for tuition and fees, statue 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education.
- c. ~~Have completed at least 60 semester hours in an academic program in which the institution offers a baccalaureate degree, or have completed the requirements for the Associate of Arts, the Associate of Science degree or any other associate degree at an institution which is regionally accredited;~~
- d. have a cumulative GPA of at least ~~2.0~~ **2.5** or the minimum required for the degree program of study;
- e. enroll as a full-time, degree-seeking student.

II. **Part - time Students**

The amount authorized for “Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars” awards for students in this category will be prorated based on the number of credit hours for which the student is enrolled.

To be eligible to receive an “Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars” award, the applicant must:

- a. be a United States citizen;
- b. be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statues for tuition and fees, statue 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education.
- c. ~~be at least 21 years old as a first time freshman or have been out of school at least two years prior to re-enrolling;~~
- c. have a high school diploma or equivalent (G.E.D. Certificate)

- ~~d. have completed at least 12 hours in an academic program in which the institution offers a baccalaureate degree~~
- d. have a cumulative GPA of at least ~~2.0~~ **2.5**:
- e. enroll at least half-time as a degree-seeking student ~~at a 4-year institution and for technical colleges half-time as defined by institutional guidelines and regulations.~~

### **South Carolina Commission on Higher Education Administrative Responsibilities**

**The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education is the state agency responsible for implementing the statewide policy.** The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education will have overall administrative responsibility to include:

1. requesting Access and Equity Program funding through the Budget and Control Board;
2. biannual evaluation notifying eligible institutions in timely fashion concerning steps required on their parts in the application, awarding and reporting procedures;
3. receiving and processing requests from institutions for funding;
4. recommending allocation of funds to institutions in equitable fashion on the basis of available funds and institutional estimates of eligible students;
5. gathering and analyzing pertinent information regarding grant recipients from institutions.

### **Eligible public postsecondary institutions will have the following responsibilities:**

- 1. College and university administrators oversee campus budgets, set policies such as admissions standards, coordinate degree programs, and facilitate credit transfer and articulation between the state's public colleges and universities, therefore guidelines (in addition to the minimum statewide scholarship guidelines) may be imposed by the institution.**
2. providing matching funds on a dollar for dollar basis for the Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars program;
3. receiving and screening scholarship applications, and selecting recipients;
4. utilizing other available financial aid funds in conjunction with these awards to recruit and assist as many "underrepresented" students as possible;

5. submitting to the Commission on Higher Education any information concerning recipients needed and requested by the Commission for reporting and accounting purposes. Such information shall include certification that all students receiving “Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars” awards are South Carolina residents.

## Access and Equity Advisory Committee's Recommendation:

**Below for Committee's approval is Access & Equity Advisory Committee's recommendation of the revised guidelines (in red and strikethroughs) for the Access & Equity Graduate Incentive Scholars Program.**

### Guidelines for Graduate Incentive Scholarship Program

Description —The Graduate Incentive Scholarship (GIS) Program will provide forgivable loans to **"historically underrepresented"** ~~"other race"~~ students in master's, first professional, and doctoral programs at public higher education institutions where such programs are offered. The GIS program is implemented annually at the following institutions: Clemson University, University of South Carolina, University of South Carolina School of Medicine, Medical University of South Carolina, College of Charleston, The Citadel, Winthrop University, S. C. State University, and Francis Marion University.

#### Objectives

The Graduate Incentive Scholarship Program has five major objectives:

1. to increase the number of **"historically underrepresented"** ~~"other race"~~ students in graduate and professional programs of study at public postsecondary institutions in the state;
2. to reduce any disparity that exists between the proportion of **"historically underrepresented"** ~~black~~ state residents and white state residents completing graduate and professional programs at South Carolina's public postsecondary institutions;
3. to increase the pool from which **"historically underrepresented"** ~~"other race"~~ faculty and administrative staff members are chosen by South Carolina public postsecondary institutions;
4. to increase, at South Carolina public institutions, the number of **"historically underrepresented"** ~~"other race"~~ students studying at the **graduate** ~~master's~~ and first professional level. ~~in "shortage" academic/professional areas in the state;~~
5. to increase the number of outstanding **"historically underrepresented"** ~~"other race"~~ students, remaining in the state following completion of their graduate/professional studies.

<sup>1</sup> **"Historically Underrepresented"** ~~"Other race"~~ students are ~~African-American~~ students **that have been historically underrepresented** at traditionally white institutions and ~~white students at traditionally black institutions~~ **in South Carolina.**

<sup>2</sup> ~~"Shortage" academic/professional areas are areas in which overall shortages exist in South Carolina, or areas in which black state residents are underrepresented. The definition also applies to manpower needs in South Carolina.~~

## **Student Eligibility Criteria**

### **Doctoral Level**

1. United States citizen;
2. Accepted for admission to or enrolled in a doctoral program, or terminal degree program in the fine or applied arts, at a South Carolina public postsecondary institution;
3. Member of **“historically underrepresented”** ~~“other-race”~~ at institution to be attended;
4. Outstanding student;<sup>1</sup>
5. For annual renewal, satisfactory academic standing and continued enrollment in an eligible program.

NOTE: In instances where there are equally qualified applicants who are South Carolina residents and nonresidents, preference will be given to applicants who are South Carolina residents. Priority will be given to applications of full-time students when making awards. Remaining available funds may be awarded to part-time students.

### **Master’s and First Professional Level**

At the master’s level, priority will be given to full-time students with strong academic records whose ultimate intent is to pursue a terminal degree program which would qualify them for a college teaching position.

1. United States citizen;
2. Accepted for admission to, or enrolled as, a full-time student in an eligible master’s or first professional program at a South Carolina public postsecondary institution;
3. ~~Bona fide resident of South Carolina~~ **be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statutes for tuition and fees, statute 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education;**
4. Member of **“historically underrepresented”** ~~“other-race”~~ at institution to be attended;
5. Outstanding student;
6. For annual renewal, satisfactory academic standing, and continued enrollment in an eligible program.

<sup>1</sup> Outstanding student as defined by the participating institution on the basis of previous academic record and scores on any tests required by the institution.

<sup>2</sup> Satisfactory academic standing as defined by the institution.

### **Limitation of Awards**

The ~~maximum~~ annual amount of a Graduate Incentive Scholarship will be **up to** \$15,000 for a full-time student at the Doctoral level and certain first professional levels; **up to** ~~\$7,000~~ **\$7,500** for full-time students at the Masters level. The amount authorized for part-time students will be pro-rated, based on full-time equivalency at that level.

### **Administrative Responsibilities**

**The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education is the state agency responsible for implementing the statewide policy.** The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education will have overall administrative responsibility, to include:

1. ~~Requesting program funding~~ **requesting Access and Equity Program funding through the Budget and Control Board;**
2. ~~Determining the eligible shortage areas in graduate/professional academic programs and in manpower needs in South Carolina, with the assistance of an ad hoc group formed for the purpose, giving priority to the areas represented by eligible fellowship renewal applicants;~~
2. Notifying eligible institutions in timely fashion concerning steps required on their part in the application, awarding and reporting procedures;
3. Receiving and processing requests from institutions for funding;
5. ~~Determining allocation of funds to institutions in equitable fashion on the basis of eligible programs and institutional estimates of numbers of eligible students;~~
4. Gathering and analyzing pertinent information from institutions regarding fellowship recipients;
5. Making final decisions on forgiveness of loans to recipients.

**Eligible public postsecondary institutions will have the following responsibilities:**

1. **College and university administrators oversee campus budgets, set policies such as admissions standards, coordinate degree programs, and facilitate credit transfer and articulation between the state's public colleges and universities, therefore guidelines (in addition to the minimum statewide scholarship guidelines) may be imposed by the institution;**



2. Submitting to the Commission on Higher Education a report which ~~states~~ (verifies) a) that the institution did not supplant any institutional funds with Graduate Incentive Scholarship funds;  
  
b) ~~That institutional graduate funds have been awarded at not less than the level of the preceding year; and~~  
  
c) ~~That the amount of scholarships awarded to "other race" students has not been reduced. These reports will provide data, by race, on the number and level of scholarships that have been awarded;~~
3. ~~Development of an annual publication showcasing the current~~ **Submit** to the Commission on Higher Education **an annual report of the current** students in the GIS **program;** ~~pipeline and submission appropriate information to be placed in the GIS data base for the state of South Carolina.~~
4. Receiving and screening scholarship applications, and selecting recipients with priority being given to **returning students currently enrolled in the program;** ~~recipients eligible for renewal;~~
5. Utilizing other available fellowships and assistantships in conjunction with GIS funds allocated to the institutions to recruit and assist as many **"historically underrepresented"** ~~"other race"~~ students as possible;
6. Submitting to the Commission on Higher Education any information concerning recipients needed and requested by the Commission for reporting and accounting purposes. Such information shall include:
  - a. Certification that copies of completed "Agreements" are on file for all students receiving GIS and, for masters and first professional students, that all residency requirements have been met;
  - b. A report indicating the status of students who have received GIS in past years. Once a former recipient has fulfilled his/her obligation and that has been reported, no further reporting on that student is required.

Each recipient is required to sign a legal obligation to maintain normal progress toward degree attainment in their educational program and is encouraged to maintain employment in the State of South Carolina as a deferment to the scholarship funds received.

### **Forgiveness of Scholarship in Return for Professional Work in South Carolina**

A Graduate Incentive Scholarship is given with an expectation that the student will maintain employment status within the state of South Carolina for the same duration of time the scholarship was received.